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TRANSFORMING A CHEERLESS ROOM.

BY A. ASHMUN KELLY.

TO make the most of one's resources involves the possession of subtle quality of the mind akin to genius. Some people seem peculiarly gifted in securing the maximum amount of goods or pleasures from a minimum outlay of money or effort, and hence, to undertake to give advice to those not so gifted would seem like wasted effort.

And yet persons of limited means, and equally narrow bounds of natural ability for economical expenditure, may be greatly helped by explicit directions as to what they should or should not choose or purchase. Especially may they be helped if their color sense is lacking, or if their sphere of life has precluded the seeing of good household art and decoration.

The woman who is dissatisfied with the arrangement of her home, upon which she has, perhaps, expended much thought, care and money, is not by any means a rare personage. Her dissatisfaction is likely to be a vague quantity. Something indescribable seems lacking, she knows not what. It may be only a room. She feebly adds a framed picture to it, a cheap one, perhaps; or, worse still, it is a photograph of some deceased friend or relative. Oh, could she but know just how very much a few dollars could do for her, if properly used! How her cold, formal room might be transformed into one glowing with warmth and beauty!

Say there is an old-fashioned marble top table in the middle of the floor; a vast mirror over the mantel-piece; green rep curtains at the windows, and a suite of furniture. Say the woodwork is glossy white, and the paper one in which bluish-gray predominates. The carpet somewhat antique, and dark red in tone. The room is a northerly one. A very bad case for treatment, and yet not an unusual one.

A housewife of limited means and willing hands, with time for it, may effect a change in such a room that ordinarily requires the services of the painter, paper-hanger and upholsterer combined. If she has girls old enough to assist, or if John is handy and obliging, her work will be lighter.

Clean off the old paper. Buy a package of prepared kalsomine, follow the printed directions, and do the ceiling. Choose a bluish shade. Paper the side-walls, if courageous enough. It requires some experience, even for an amateur, to hang wall-paper. A creamy-colored paper is best. Kalsomine makes a beautifully soft surface, and gives a nice background for furniture and pictures, much as paint, than which it is of softer effect. Kalsomine is easily applied, and on dry walls is quite durable. Paint is always the most desirable material for walls, being sanitary.

A buffish shade of kalsomine looks fine. At the top of the wall, for frieze, stencil a neat design in blue. This may be a blue paint, to be had of any paint store. Indian red would look well, but olive is better. Or a paper border or frieze may be employed, and would save trouble.

The woodwork may be in dull Indian red, or a buff deeper than the wall color. Get some painter to mix the color for you.

Pull down the curtains and replace them with some bright, striped, oriental-looking stuff, or with creamy Madras muslin, placed on a sash rod, close to the window, and fastened with ribbon bows or cords and tassels.

Take down the mirror and put it at one end of the room, about three feet from the floor. Under it put a plain pine shelf, supported by cheap iron brackets, first painted same as woodwork, and cover it with dull blue velvet, having a five-inch fringe around the edge.

Drape one side of the mirror with some soft art material, and the other with dried palms or long grasses. Put a terra cotta colored pot on the shelf, and in it put a palm or ferns. Any bric-a-brac handy may also be placed on this shelf.

Now push the lounge or sofa in front of the shelf, and cover its objectionable upholstery with a cheap Indian dhurrie. At one end place a dull red milking stool, holding a tall palm. At the other end a small table holding a lamp or a vase. In front, on the floor, put a cheap Koula rug, and then admire the artistic effect, as you will.

The white marble table put in a corner and throw some sort of a cover over it. Let it hold a tall pot filled with evergreen boughs or cat-tails, or tall dried grasses. If the pot is plain, twist a red or yellow scarf about it. Artistic odds and ends may fill up the table.

Over the mantel put a couple of book shelves, about twenty inches apart, with a small mirror below them. Paint shelves and mirror frame a dull Indian red or deep buff, according to color of room. Paste bright Japanese paper between the shelves. Thus you will have quite a pretty over-mantel.

Box seats beneath the windows, covered with striped stuff similar to the curtains, will add greatly to the appearance of the room.

A few rugs, over a painted or stained floor, and a table or two, with some inexpensive but artistic pictures on the walls, will complete the transformation, and there you are, a very artistic room at little expense.

For a north room always employ warm colors, such as the yellows, which give a pleasurable glow to the aspect, and serve also to make the room brighter by the greater diffusion of light. Red is a hot color. It really makes a room warmer, five degrees, the scientists tell us. It and old gold and buff are used on dining-rooms; also in large halls and stairways. It is called a stationary color also, and is the only color known as such. Blue gives the effect of distance and height.

Some knowledge of the laws of color is necessary to correct furnishing. Yet some women seem to arrive at effects of the highest artistic value without any such technical knowledge. It is a gift. Such persons, gifted also with the commercial sense or ability to buy and select wisely, make their homes beautiful and artistic without seeming effort, and their work is not of the curiosity-shop kind, flashy, cheap and stuffy.

PIANO DECORATIONS.

BY JAMES THOMSON.

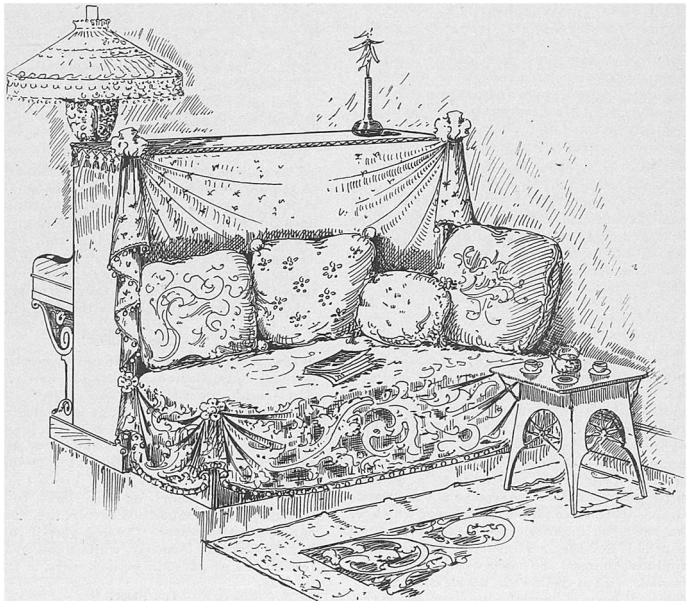
IN refurnishing a parlor it is oftentimes a matter of difficulty to bring the old piano into harmony with the newer surroundings. The depressing coloring characteristic of the "best room" of our early days is happily now seen but seldom, the people of the present generation being, as a rule, disposed to affect lighter and more cheerful schemes of furnishing. This being the case, some means have got to be considered whereby the rosewood piano can be brought into conformity with the new conditions.

First, it is possible to paint it in white and gold, but to do this properly involves the removing of the old varnish, which is rather difficult, and with the painting and enameling makes the change rather costly.

When painting is done directly over the old varnish it will be constantly peeling off, therefore there can be nothing gained by that method. The next alternative is placing the instrument with the back facing outward, in which case there develops numerous ways of treatment. A drapery may be arranged as suggested in the illustration, and the angle formed by the piano and wall made to form a cosy corner, or a low three-fold screen with panels of silkline may be disposed against it. Very pleasing effects in this connection may be obtained by the use of growing or artificial plants of the palm variety.

But when it is not possible to thus place the piano, and it is necessary to have it set in the usual manner, other methods of adornment will have to be devised. The top can be covered and the ends concealed by a drapery reaching to the floor. The space above the key board may be treated with a suitable textile fabric gathered on rods placed top and bottom, and over this is arranged in graceful folds a festoon drapery. This may be in one, two or three sections, or may be a simple silken scarf, artistically arranged from time to time.

A very successful scheme on this order was executed in white china silk, having a small golden tracery as a design. The edging was a flossy fringe of gold bullion, the shirred portion being made with creamy cheese cloth finished at the bottom with a strip of fringe.



COZEY CORNER DECORATION FOR BACK OF PIANO.